

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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SUBJ: PRESS REACTION TO NIXON ADDRESS

1. NON-COMMUNIST HONG KONG PAPERS, BOTH CHINESE AND ENGLISH, AUG. 17 GAVE PROMINENT PLAY TO NEWS REPORTS OF PRESIDENT NIXON'S WATERGATE ADDRESS. WAH KIU YAT PO FILLED ITS ENTIRE SECOND PAGE WITH USIS-RELEASED FULL TRANSLATION OF THE SPEECH. OF THE FOUR LEFTIST MORNING DAILIES, WEN WEI PAO AND TA KUNG PAO GAVE THE NEWS MINOR PLAY, WHILE CHING PO AND HONG KONG COMMERCIAL DAILY MADE NO MENTION OF IT AT ALL.
 2. EDITORIAL COMMENT WAS OFFERED BY TWO ENGLISH AND TWO CHINESE DAILIES, SOME FAVORABLE AND SOME UNFAVORABLE.
 3. THE INDEPENDENT MING PAO SAID: "THE ADDRESS IS QUITE PERSUASIVE. ONLY IT DOES NOT APPEAR VERY FITTING FOR HIM TO DRAW A PARALLEL BETWEEN THE UNREST AND PROTESTS OF THE 1960'S AND THE WATERGATE AFFAIR, BOTH AS INSTANCES OF PEOPLE ACTING UNLAWFULLY OUT OF CONVICTION THAT THEIR CAUSE WAS JUSTIFIED. THESE TWO MATTERS ARE VERY DIFFERENT IN NATURE. THE PROTESTS OF THE 1960'S WERE FOR THE GOOD OF THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE, BUT THE WATERGATE AFFAIR WAS FOR THE SAKE OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY AND THE PRESIDENT
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(ALTHOUGH ONE CAN STRETCH IT SOME AND SAY IT IS FOR THE

GOOD OF THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE). THE OBJECTIVES IN THE TWO CASES ARE AFTER ALL DIFFERENT, IN THAT ONE IS SELFLESS AND THE OTHER PARTISAN.

4. "IN NIXON'S ADDRESS THERE IS A PASSAGE COMMENTING ON THE CONFLICT BETWEEN 'SECURITY AND LIBERTIES,' WHICH WE THINK IS QUITE CORRECT AND CAN BE APPLIED TO ANY COUNTRY.

5. "ALL GOVERNMENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY, AND THE CARRYING OUT OF THIS RESPONSIBILITY OFTEN INFRINGES UPON THE LIBERTIES OF THE PEOPLE...

6. "IF WE LOSE OUR LIBERTIES WE WILL HAVE LITTLE USE FOR SECURITY.' WE THINK THIS IS THE BEST SENTENCE IN NIXON'S ADDRESS."

7. THE INDEPENDENT SING PAO COMMENTED: "NIXON'S REASON FOR REFUSING TO LET GO OF WHITE HOUSE TAPES IS TO MAINTAIN THE TRADITION OF CONFIDENTIALITY.

8. "THIS REASON SEEMS LIKE A PRETEXT AT THE FIRST GLANCE. BUT ACTUALLY IT IS VERY IMPORTANT.

9. "A PRESIDENT'S CONVERSATIONS WITH HIS SUBORDINATES SHOULD BE KEPT HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL; OTHERWISE THE PRESIDENT WILL NOT BE FREE TO SPEAK, AND THE SUBORDINATES WILL BE SIMILARLY ENDANGERED.

10. "BUT, IS SUCH A FRIGHTENING SITUATION LIKELY TO EMERGE IN THE OFFICE OF THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT? IT ALL DEPENDS ON WHETHER PRESIDENT NIXON WINS HIS STRUGGLE. ONCE A BAD PRECEDENT IS SET, HIS SUCCESSORS WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO SPEAK FREELY."

11. THE SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST SAID THE SPEECH "ADDED NOTHING NEW OF SUBSTANCE" AND THAT "HE REPEATED HIS PREVIOUS AFFIRMATION OF INNOCENCE." DECLARING THAT EACH INDIVIDUAL WILL HAVE TO MAKE UP HIS OWN MIND ON WHETHER TO BELIEVE THE PREUIDENT, THE EDITORIAL SAID, "AND THERE LIES THE CENTRAL TRAGEDY OF WATERGATE--THAT THE VERACITY OF THE LEADER OF THE UNCLASSIFIED

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WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL COUNTRY REMAINS SUSPECT IN THE MINDS OF SO MANY....

12. "THROUGHOUT THE SPEECH RAN A THREAD OF REALIZATION OF WHAT WATERGATE HAS COST THE UNITED STATES, THE PRESIDENCY, AND MR. NIXON HIMSELF....

13. "IT WAS NECESSARY TO UNDERSTAND THIS, FOR IT MARKS

THE POINT OF DEPARTURE FROM WHICH THE PRESIDENT CAN LAUNCH HIS BID TO RESTORE HIS OWN CREDIBILITY AS WELL AS REBUILD CONFIDENCE IN THE OFFICE HE HOLDS AND THE GOVERNMENT HE LEADS...."

14. THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL EMERGE FROM THIS EXPERIENCE A BETTER AND STRONGER NATION "IS A HOPE THAT THE REST OF THE WORLD SHARES AND IS ANXIOUS TO SEE FULFILLED."

15. CAPTIONING ITS LEADER "BACK TO SQUARE ONE," THE HONGKONG STANDARD SAID, "AN AVERAGE AMERICAN, ONCE A MEMBER OF NOW NON-EXISTENT SILENT MAJORITY, WOULD HAVE HOPED THAT MR. NIXON WOULD ONE DAY, WHEN HE DECIDED TO SPEAK UP, RESTORE TO HIS HIGH OFFICE THE UNIMPEACHABLE INTEGRITY THAT BELONGS TO IT. PRESIDENT NIXON'S LONG AWAITED TELEVISION ADDRESS DASHED THIS HOPE...."

16. "HE OBVIOUSLY TOOK THE LINE THAT, AS THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE COUNTRY, HE WAS NO MORE OBLIGED TO ANSWER THESE CHARGES THAN TO HAND OVER THE TAPES...."

17. "IF MR. NIXON'S ADVERSARIES IN THE SENATE TAKE SERIOUS AND LEGITIMATE EXCEPTION TO THE PRESIDENT'S OVERT ATTEMPT TO WOO HIS COUNTRYMEN OVER THE HEADS OF HIS CAPITOL HILL CRITICS, WITH AN IMPLIED HINT THAT THEY HAVE BEEN NEGLECTING THEIR MORE IMPORTANT DUTIES, SOME WOULD STILL NOTE THAT AT LONG LAST THE PRESIDENT CAN SEE FOR HIMSELF TO WHAT EXTENT THE WATERGATE CRISIS HAS AFFECTED THE COUNTRY'S IMAGE ABROAD ON WIDE-RANGING ISSUES, NOT EXCLUDING FOREIGN RELATIONS...."

18. "MR. NIXON TAKES THE LINE THAT THE COUNTRY IS TIRING OF THE SCANDAL... IN SHORT, WE HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS DAMN SILLY BUSINESS. LET'S PUT IT ASIDE AND LET THE COUNTRY UNCLASSIFIED

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GO ON WITH ITS OTHER BUSINESS...."

19. "THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE PRESIDENTIAL PRESCRIPTION WILL BE REJECTED BY THE SENATE, INDEED BY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AS A WHOLE...."

20. "MR. NIXON'S SPEECH PROVIDED ONE LESSON. FROM NOW ON, THE SENATE HAS EVERY REASON TO CONTINUE ITS PROBE, BUT ON ITS OWN STRENGTH, WITHOUT EXPECTING ANY COOPERATION FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE. THIS MEANS THE BATTLE WILL GET MORE FIERCE, WITH STAKES HIGHER THAN EVER BEFORE. AND THE FINAL RESULT STILL REMAINS ANYBODY'S GUESS." END QUOTE
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